# HAPPINESS

UNTITLED
an original screenplay by
Todd Solondz

Director Todd Solondz
Producers Ted Hope and Christine Vachon

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EXT. HAPPY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The sign is illuminated.

INT. HAPPY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Pretty, 30ish JOY JORDAN and teary-eyed STUART sit opposite each other. He is trying to resist bursting into tears as they finish dessert.

JOY
Stuart?...Are you okay?

STUART
Yeah. Sure. I'm fine.

JOY
Good. Well. I had a really nice time.

STUART
Yeah. Me too.

JOY
Of course, you know I've always had a nice time with you.

STUART
Same here.

JOY
But...

STUART
Yeah.

JOY
You understand.

STUART
Unh.

JOY
And you don't hate me?

STUART
No.

JOY
'Cause you know I could never hate you. At the same time, I just don't think I could ever...you know... you. In the way you should be...

STUART
Yeah.

JOY
And deserve to be.

STUART
Unh hunh.

JOY
Well. The food here was excellent--
I'm gonna recommend it to my sis-
ters! How many stars did it get?

STUART
Three and a half.

And the dam cracks wide open. He bawls. A pause.

JOY
Do you feel better now?
(STUART nods.)
Me too.

STUART
I'm sorry.

JOY
It's really good we had this talk.

STUART
Yeah.

JOY
Before things went too far...You
know, got too serious.

STUART
Yeah. I'm sorry. I'm too serious.

JOY
No, you're not. It's me.

STUART
No, it's me.

JOY
Okay. It's you. I'm sorry.

STUART
Okay.

JOY
'Cause I mean...

STUART
I know.

JOY
The thing is, I want to do what's right--for both of us. I spent a lot of time...examining...my heart. And I felt that you deserved my honesty.

STUART
Thanks.

Pause.

JOY
Now I just want to make you whole again.

STUART
I'm whole.

JOY
Really?

STUART
Really.

JOY
...'Cause I was afraid we wouldn't be able to be friends anymore.

STUART
(laughing, sort of)
Oh, Joy!

JOY
Oh, but you know how it is. And well, most guys...

STUART
I'm not most guys.

JOY
I know. If only most guys were like you.

STUART
But then I'd be like most guys.

JOY
(laughs)
Oh, Stuart. If only I felt the way I'd like to feel with you... Life is so unfair. It's all my fault.

STUART
I know.
(a beat.)

Are you sure...?

JOY
Yes.

STUART
Is it someone else?

JOY
No, it's just you.

STUART
I want to show you something I got for you.

JOY
For me?

STUART
(hands her a gift)
Open it up.

JOY
(discovers a pewter ashtray)
Oh, but Stuart. This is...oh, this is beautiful!

STUART
Thanks. It's a Gainsevoort reproduction. Boston, late 1880's. I sent away for it just after we had our...first date.

JOY
Oh, I just love it. It's a...It's a collector's item.

STUART
Yeah, it is pretty special.

JOY
(laughs)
It almost makes me want to start smoking again!

STUART
Look at the bottom.

JOY
(examines more closely)
Ooh.

STUART
Forty karat gold-plate inlaid base.

JOY
Oh, Stuart. Thank you. This really means something to me. I'll always treasure it...as a token...

STUART
No, you won't.
(retrieves his gift; a sudden shift in emotion:)
'Cause this is for the girl who loves me. The girl who cares for me, for who I am, not what I look like. I wanted you to know what you'd be missing. You think I don't appreciate art. You think I don't understand fashion. You think I'm not hip. You think I'm pathetic, a nerd, a lard-ass fatso. You think I'm shit. Well, you're wrong. 'Cause I'm champagne...And you're shit. And till the day you die, you, not me, will always be shit.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Thunder. Rain. STUART's car drives by.

INT. STUART'S CAR - NIGHT

JOY sits beside STUART, who is driving. A plastic "World of Pewter" shopping bag hangs by the glove compartment.

EXT. JOY'S PLACE - NIGHT

The car pulls over.

JOY
Well, good night.

STUART
Good night.

JOY gets out. STUART drives away.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BILL'S OFFICE - DAY

ALLEN talks to his psychiatrist, BILL MAPLEWOOD.

ALLEN

...I dunno, but whenever I see her I just want to...you know... I want to undress her, I want to tie her up and pump her pump pump pump till she screams bloody murder. And then I want to flip her ass over and pump her even more and so hard my dick shoots right through her and so that my come squirts out of her mouth...Not that I could ever actually...do that...Oh, if only she knew how I felt, how deep down I really cared for her, respected her, she would love me back. Maybe. But she hardly even knows I exist. I mean, she knows I exist--we are neighbors, we smile politely at each other...But I don't know how I could ever begin to really talk to her, what can I talk about? I have nothing to talk about. I'm boring. I know. I've been told before, so don't tell me it's not true. 'Cause it's a fact. I bore people. People look at me and they get bored. They listen to me and they zone out, bored...And for her to see how boring I am...no, no, no...It's better I say nothing...and hope... though right now, I have to say, if I were to suddenly jump out of my window, she wouldn't care. I mean, she'd care, of course, she'd care, I mean, she is human, but I mean she'd care the way you care about a stranger you read about in the paper that jumps in front of a running subway train, a stranger whose name you're never sure how to pronounce, if it's even printed. I'd be an anecdote... maybe. But you know what I'm going to do?

ALLEN (CONT'D)
When I see her next time, as soon as I see her, I'm just going to tell her...tell her I find her...attractive. And that'll be that. Then...then we'll see...

EXT. HIGH RISE - EVENING

HELEN parks, gets out of her car, walks towards the apartment building entrance.

INT. HIGH RISE LOBBY - EVENING

HELEN walks towards the elevator and waits beside ALLEN.

ALLEN mumbles something. HELEN is oblivious.

ALLEN
How's it going?

HELEN
Okay.

The elevator arrives.

INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

ALLEN and HELEN step inside. They ride in silence up to their floor.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

ALLEN and HELEN emerge from the elevator.

ALLEN
See ya.

HELEN
Yeah.

And they walk their separate ways.

INT. ALLEN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

ALLEN drops his stuff.

He takes a shower.

He lies down.

He glances at a book of poetry. CLOSE ON the jacket photo of the author and accompanying brief bio (i.e. "Nominated for the PEN/Faulkner Prize for poetry, Helen Jordan has taught at Harvard, Yale...").

He leans his head against the wall, listens to HELEN making love to somebody next door: "Oh, Helen! Helen! Helen!" etc.
He removes his ear from the wall, sits on the bed, a phone book beside him.

He starts flipping randomly through the phone book. He turns to a page. He dials a number from the book. No answer. He sighs. Tries the next number down. A man picks up. ALLEN hangs up immediately. He dials again. A beautiful-sounding WOMAN picks up.

ALLEN
Hello, is this Claire?

WOMAN (V.O.)
Who is this?

ALLEN hangs up. He buries his head in his hands.

INT. TRISH'S PLACE - DAY

JOY sits in the kitchen with her sister TRISH, who is doing her nails. Trish's baby CHLOE lies in JOY's lap. JUANITA the cleaning woman cleans up in the b.g. The family dog KOOKI teethes on a bone.

Cute little TIMMY appears, in a Robocop-type outfit.

TRISH
Oh, Timmy! Look who's here!

TIMMY
(aiming a laser at JOY)
Die, Aunt Joy! Die!

TRISH
Timmy!

She tries to go after him, but he has already run off.

JOY
Oh, leave him alone, Trish. He's just going through a phase.

TRISH
Oh, I know, but...

JOY
(trying to make light)
It's okay. I'm strong enough.

JOY suddenly bursts into tears.

TRISH
Oh, Joy, Joy. What's the matter?

JOY
I don't know what it is, but I feel there's so much hostility directed at me.

TRISH
Did another guy dump you?

JOY
No! I...oh, I feel horrible.

TRISH
Aww. Timmy didn't mean it.

JOY
I'm sorry. I-I'm just overworked.

TRISH
It's okay. Because now maybe you'll listen to me.

JOY
What?

A weighty pause.

TRISH
You've got to eat red meat.

JOY
Oh, Trish...

TRISH
Oh, I knew that's how you'd react, but it's true. I've been watching you and, well...My doctor says just once a month...

JOY
I know...

TRISH
Really. It's the best thing for the skin. It'll clear it all up.

JOY
What's wrong with my skin?

TRISH
It's fine now, but in another few years...Please, Joy. I'm speaking for your own good.

JOY
Oh, I know. Thanks.

A tender moment: TRISH and JOY hold hands.

JOY
I'm so happy.

TRISH
Are you really?

JOY
Being around you and the kids...

TRISH
Oh...And I'm so happy you're happy. 'Cause all this time I've been thinking you were so miserable.

JOY
Oh, Trish! That's too funny, when I couldn't be happier.

TRISH
It's just, what with your music career never really....

JOY
Oh, my career's fine!

TRISH
Oh, I know, it will be! I just know it! And then you'll move out of Mom and Dad's...

JOY
Real soon!

TRISH
And you'll meet Mr. Right!

JOY
Oh, I will. Already I feel I'm off to a fresh start!

TRISH
That's right. Just because you've hit 30, doesn't mean you can't be fresh anymore.

JOY
That's right!

Pause.

TRISH
You know, Joy, I've never told you this before, but now that we're older, and I feel so bonded to you, well...the truth is--oh, I know this sounds horrible, but I feel I have to be fully open with you, get beyond all the old barriers, sibling nonsense--well, the truth is I always thought you would never amount to much. That you'd end up alone, without a career or anything. Really, it's what we all thought. Mom, Dad, Helen...everyone...I'd always prayed we'd all be wrong, but you had always seemed so...doomed to failure. But now I see, it's not true. There is a glimmer of hope for you after all. Oh, I know I'm repeating myself, but, oh...
(tears well up)
I am so happy for you...

EXT. PARK - DAY

It is sunny and warm. Couples straight and gay walk hand in hand, families picnic, beautiful people sunbathe.

BILL observes the pleasant tranquility from atop a hill. Suddenly he pulls out a machine gun and starts shooting at everyone.

Bloodshed everywhere. Then silence.

VOICE
And how is this different?

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

BILL sits opposite his PSYCHIATRIST, to whom the VOICE belongs.

BILL
I don't kill myself at the end.

PSYCHIATRIST
Do you see this as something positive?

BILL
Gee, I don't know.

PSYCHIATRIST
How do you feel at the end?

BILL
Much better. I wake up happy. Feeling good. But then I get very depressed because I'm living in reality.

PSYCHIATRIST
And you wouldn't kill people in real life.

BILL
No. I don't think so.

PSYCHIATRIST
You don't sound so certain.

BILL
I'm thinking about my patients.

PSYCHIATRIST
What about them?

BILL
My patients are ugly. Their problems are trite. Each one thinks he is unique. On a professional level they bore me. On a personal level I have no sympathy. They deserve what they get.

PSYCHIATRIST
And what about your family?

BILL
Trish is good to me.

PSYCHIATRIST
But still no sex?

BILL
No. But she's not too interested, either. So really there's no problem there, when you think about it, on a certain level.

EXT. CAR - DAY

BILL is driving along.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Reminiscent of Bill's dream: schoolchildren are playing, teachers supervising. A laborer is eating lunch with a co-worker. A little boy is sitting alone in the shade of a tree.

BILL pulls up to the side of the field and observes from his parking space.

He gets back in his car.

INT. BILL'S CAR - DAY

BILL is at the wheel again, a little tense.

EXT. MINI-MALL - DAY

BILL pulls into the lot. He walks into the 7-11.

INT. 7-11 - DAY

BILL picks up a Boy's Life, pays for it.

EXT. MINI-MALL - DAY

BILL gets into the back seat of his car and sets to masturbating.

SHOPPERS walk by with shopping carts, little children, oblivious to the activity inside Bill's car.

Finally, BILL gets out of his car, tucks in his shirt, tosses the scrunched-up magazine into a dumpster, returns to his car and pulls out.

INT. BILL'S KITCHEN - EVENING

BILL comes home as TRISH finishes preparing the dinner table. He gives her a peck on the cheek. Their kids are eating in the adjacent TV Room.

TRISH
So how was work today, Hon?

BILL
Oh, fine.

KOOKI sniffs BILL's pants, excited.

TRISH
Kooki, no!

BILL
Down, Kooki!

KOOKI calms down somewhat.

BILLY enters, opens the refrigerator, pours himself a soda. He looks dejected.

BILL
Hey, Billy! What's going on?

BILLY
Nothing.

TRISH
He's
(making quotation marks with her fingers)
"depressed."

BILL
Is something the matter?

BILLY
I don't wanna talk about it.

And he leaves for the TV room again.

TRISH
Ignore him. He's just doing it for attention. He thinks you'll be impressed. As if. So anyway... Joy came by today.

BILL
How's she doing?

TRISH
Oh, God, I dunno, and frankly... I'm concerned. I mean, she's not like me. She doesn't "have it all." She pretends to be happy, but I can see right through her: she's miserable.

BILL
Why do you think that is?

TRISH
To be frank, I think she's lazy.

TRISH (CONT'D)
She's not a go-getter, like me or Helen. And she's so picky. I gave Damien Ross her phone number, for what it's worth, and Joy sounded interested, naturally, but...I dunno. I'm afraid to have to say it, but truly it's what I believe: she'll always be alone.

BILL
We're all alone.

TRISH
Oh, Bill. Sometimes I wonder how any of your patients can talk to you!

BILL
Sometimes I wonder if they'll ever stop. I should tape some for you.

TRISH
Would you? Would you really? So that I could listen, too?

BILL
No.

TRISH
You're such a tease. You know I wouldn't tell anyone.

BILL
I know. 'Cause you're so secretive.

TRISH
Well, maybe not as secretive as you.

BILL
What secret would you like me to tell you?

TRISH puts her arms around BILL.

TRISH
(whispers coyly)
Like how come no matter how much you treat me like shit, I can't help loving you even more?

INT. BILL'S BEDROOM - LATER

While TRISH puts CHLOE and TIMMY to bed, BILLY comes and sits beside BILL on his bed.

BILLY
Dad?

BILL
Yes, Billy?

BILLY
What does come mean?

BILL
Come?

BILLY
You know...

BILL
Well, you know how sometimes your penis gets erect...well, sometimes it gets so excited that a sticky milky substance shoots out.

BILLY
...Dickwad?

BILL
Yes, only come can be used as a verb as well.
(a beat.)
Billy?

BILLY
Yeah?

BILL
Have you ever come?

BILLY
Yeah...

BILL
Now Billy, it's alright if you haven't.

BILLY
Well, I have...

BILL
Billy...

BILLY
But everyone else in class has and...I want to come, too!

BILLY starts crying.

BILL
Aw, now, it's okay, it's okay. Have you tried playing with yourself?

BILLY
You mean...

BILL
With your penis.

BILLY
A little.

BILL
How did it feel?

BILLY
I dunno. I don't know what to do.

BILL
Do you want me to...show you?

BILLY
No! No! I'm not normal!

BILLY buries his head in BILL's lap.

BILL
Aw, Billy. Don't worry. You're normal. You'll come. One day. You'll see.

INT. JOY'S PLACE - DAY

JOY is preparing to cook a steak. She is wearing rubber gloves. HELEN sits with a coffee mug at the kitchen table.

HELEN
Y'know, people are always putting New Jersey down. None of my friends can believe I live here. But that's because they don't get it: I'm living in a state of irony.

JOY
Are you sure you don't wanna stay and have dinner with me?

HELEN
(rising)
I can't. I'm giving another reading/ book-signing over at Barnes & Noble, and then Jamal is taking me out-- although I promised Fabiano...Uch. Everbody wants me...

The phone rings.

HELEN
That's it, I'm going.

JOY
Wait!

JOY picks up the phone.

JOY
Hello?

VOICE
Hi! How are you?

JOY
Is this Damien?

VOICE
Yeah!...So, uh, how are you doing?

JOY
Oh, fine. Could you hold on a second?...Helen?

HELEN is almost out the door.

HELEN
See ya!

JOY
Thanks for stopping by!

HELEN leaves.

JOY
(into phone)
Sorry. That was my sister leaving.

VOICE
Oh. Yeah...um...yeah...

Pause.

JOY
So, um, Trish told me you might be calling.

VOICE
Yeah, well...

JOY
Oh, I know how weird these things can be, but I've always had such faith in Trish's judgment that I thought why not. It's not like I've got some huge social life. I mean, I do have a social life. It's just not huge.

VOICE
Same here.

JOY
Oh, really? That's so nice to hear. Most people seem so confident...

VOICE
Yeah...

JOY
Or, well, you know...They're just real jerks...

VOICE
Yeah...uh...What are you doing?

JOY
Oh, I'm sorry, I'm just trying to thaw this steak...but it's so hard and...I'm sorry.

VOICE
Oh, no. No. Don't stop. Not because of me.

JOY
Oh, but I feel I'm being so rude.

VOICE
No, no. Not at all.

JOY
Thanks.

VOICE
So...um...Are you alone now?

JOY
Oh, yeah. Don't worry. Nobody's listening in. God, you're just like me.

VOICE
What are you wearing?

JOY
You mean, when we go out? Well, where do you want to go? I'm pretty easy to please. I hate getting all dressed up.

VOICE
What are you wearing now?

JOY
Oh, just a pair of jeans. Why?

VOICE
Are they tight?

JOY
Not too tight. They fit okay. But why do you...?

VOICE
I don't mean the jeans. I mean underneath. What are you wearing underneath? Check.

JOY
(starts looking inside her jeans)
Underneath? Well, but Damien, underneath is just...
(pauses, suddenly alarmed)
This isn't Damien...is it?

VOICE
Are you getting all wet? Is your pussy all-?

JOY hangs up.

INT. ALLEN'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

VOICES of neighborhood children can be heard from outside the window.

ALLEN (the man behind the VOICE that was just on the phone with JOY) rises to the sitting position and puts a bookmark in the phonebook.

He notices the mess he made on the wallpaper. The stain looks permanent. He covers it up with a postcard. (There are many other postcards already thumbtacked to the wall.)

The doorbell rings.

ALLEN rises.

ALLEN
Who is it?

VOICE
Your neighbor Kristina.

ALLEN opens the door, sees KRISTINA. She is very big and very overweight.

ALLEN
Hey, what's up?

KRISTINA
Did you hear what happened to Pedro?

ALLEN
Pedro?

KRISTINA
You know, the night doorman?

ALLEN
Oh, yeah. What?

KRISTINA
He was found bludgeoned to death in his apartment this morning.

ALLEN
Uch.

KRISTINA
Yeah. And supposedly his penis is missing.

ALLEN
Uugh.

KRISTINA
Yeah, well, Carla in #2B is collecting money for the funeral, if you feel like it. Apparently he had no family, no known friends... Gee, if I'da known...I mean, I did always say hi, I think.

ALLEN
Me too, if it's the guy I'm thinking of.

Pause.

KRISTINA
By the way, um, I've got an extra ticket to the play-offs tonight. Wanna come with me?

ALLEN
Nah. Thanks. I got too much work.

KRISTINA
Oh.
(a beat.)
Well, anyway, I just thought I'd tell you about Pedro.

ALLEN
Thanks.

KRISTINA
See ya.

ALLEN
Yeah.

And he closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY - THAT MOMENT

KRISTINA stands outside ALLEN's door and stares at it dejectedly. Finally, tearing up the tickets, she walks back to her apartment, shutting the door behind her.

EXT. FLORIDA/ARIZONA CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - DAY

It is bright and sunny.

INT. CONDO - DAY

LENNY and MONA, in their 60s, sit at the kitchen table. There are dishes shattered on the floor.

MONA
Oh, I feel better now.

LENNY
Good.
(a beat.)
I'm gonna clean up.

Pause.

MONA
I'm gonna lie down.

MONA rises, walks to her bedroom, lies down.

LENNY clears the table.

LENNY
I'm turning on the dishwasher!

And LENNY starts vacuuming up the debris on the floor.

MONA goes to the bathroom, opens the medicine cabinet.

MONA
(calling, faux calm)
Where's my valium?!

LENNY
What?!

MONA
Nevermind!
(to herself)
Fucking asshole.

She has found a good enough valium substitute, but there are only two pills left in the bottle. She swallows them with a glass of water, lies down again.

The phone rings.

MONA
(to herself)
You answer it, Bastard.

LENNY (O.S.)
It's Trish!

MONA picks up.

MONA
Hi, Trish!

TRISH (V.O.)
Hi, Mom. How are you?

MONA
Oh, I'm fine. How are you?

TRISH (V.O.)
Fine...

MONA
Good.

TRISH (V.O.)
Did you watch Leno last night?...
Mom?

Pause.

MONA
(she bursts into tears)
He's leaving me! Your father's leaving me!

TRISH (V.O.)
Mom, what are you talking about?

MONA
Can you keep this secret? Top secret?

TRISH (V.O.)
Yes, yes, of course, Mom, but-.

MONA
He says...he doesn't love me anymore.

TRISH (V.O.)
Mom, I'm sure he doesn't mean it.

MONA
Well, he does fucking mean it! He wants a divorce!

TRISH (V.O.)
He said the word divorce?

MONA
You don't believe me? Talk to him!
(calling)
Lenny!

LENNY
Yeah?!

MONA
It's Trish! She wants to talk to you!

LENNY
(on phone)
Yeah, Trish?

TRISH (V.O.)
Is it true what Mom said?

LENNY
What?

TRISH (V.O.)
You want a divorce?

LENNY
I never used that word.

LENNY (CONT'D)
(calling)
Mona! What are you telling the kids?!

MONA comes wobbling into the room.

LENNY
(to TRISH)
She'll call you back.
(hangs up; to MONA)
Did I use the word divorce?

MONA
You said you didn't want to live with me anymore!

LENNY
Answer my question: did I use the word divorce?

MONA
You said you didn't love me anymore!

LENNY
Did I say divorce?!

MONA
...No.

LENNY
Good. I just want that much clear. Now sit down now next to me.

Pause. The phone rings.

MONA
Leave it. The machine'll get it. It's probably Joy.

LENNY
What if it's Helen?

JOY
(on the machine)
Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad. It's Joy. Just called to say hi, but I guess you're out having having a good time. Oh, well. I guess I'll talk to you tomorrow then. Okay. Bye.

Pause.

MONA
Lenny?

LENNY
Yeah?

MONA
Why?

LENNY
I dunno. I just want to be alone.

MONA
But I can let you be alone more, if that's what you want...

LENNY
Look: Things change...People change... Whatever. I want out.

Pause.

MONA
It's Diane.

LENNY
Diane?

MONA
You're in love with Diane Freed.

LENNY
Get outta here.

MONA
Well, you're in love with someone. Someone younger, probably.

LENNY
Wrong.

MONA
Lenny, it's okay. I'm not dumb. These things happen. I'll get over it. I just wish you had done this twenty years ago. Now I'll have to get another fucking face-lift.

Pause.

LENNY
I'm in love with no one.

MONA
No one?

LENNY
No one.

MONA
Okay, then.
(a beat.)
Schmuck.

INT. PHONE SALES OFFICE - DAY

The CAMERA DOLLIES across a maze of carrels, finally landing on JOY, at work as a telephone sales operator:

JOY
(on phone)
Hi! Is this Mrs. Mammangakis?... Hi! I'm calling from UniCard of America because you've been such a good customer that-.

JOY dials the number of the next name on the list, and the next. Everyone hangs up on her. Until:

INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - DAY

ALLEN is lying in bed. The phone rings. He picks it up.

ALLEN
Hello?

JOY
Hello, is this Mr. Mellencamp?

ALLEN
Yes.

JOY
Hi! I'm calling from Unicard of America because you've been such a good-.

ALLEN
Do I know you?

JOY
I'm sorry, I don't think so. But perhaps you're familiar with our-.

ALLEN hangs up. But then, for a moment, he ponders the familiarity of her voice.

Ditto JOY. She decides to dial him again. ALLEN answers, but says nothing. They both hang on, listening to each other's silence, then hang up.

EXT. JOY'S PLACE - EVENING

JOY can be heard singing and playing her guitar.

INT. JOY'S PLACE - EVENING

JOY, sitting on her bed, finishes her melancholy Joni Mitchell-like song. A display of macrame objets d'art adorns the wall.

The phone rings. She answers it.

JOY
Hello?

BERMAN (V.O.)
Hello. This is Detective Berman from the County Police Department. I'd like to speak with a Ms. Joy Jordan?

JOY
This is she.

INT. STUART'S PLACE - EVENING

POLICEMEN, a CORONER, a SUPER, ET. AL. busy themselves while STUART's body is being removed. BERMAN holds Stuart's suicide note ("Dear Joy, I can't live without you. Love, Stuart. P.S. The ashtray is yours.") in a baggie in his hand.

BERMAN
I'm sorry to disturb you, Ms. Jordan, but I'm afraid I have some bad news for you...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING COMPLEX - DAY

A bright, cheerful day. The parking lot is full.

INT. JOY'S OFFICE - DAY

JOY looks over at a corner desk where a woman is working the phones and starts crying. Her neighbor NANCY, hearing the sniffling, pauses in the midst of her work.

NANCY
What's the matter, Joy?

JOY
Stuart's dead!

NANCY
Stuart...?

JOY
Yes!

Pause.

NANCY
Who's Stuart?

JOY
You know, the guy who used to sit over at the corner there?

NANCY
You mean where Pam is sitting?

JOY
Yes!

NANCY
Was he kind of tall and a little hunched?

JOY
No, he was...well...shortish, squarish...

NANCY
Oh, Joy. I'm not sure. Did he work here long?

JOY
Oh, maybe a year, or a little over...

NANCY calls across to another neighbor, KAY.

NANCY
Kay, do you remember a guy named Stuart who used to work here over where Pam is now?

KAY
No. Why? What happened?

NANCY
He died.

KAY
Huh. Now which one was he?

NANCY
I'm not sure. Maybe Tom knows.
Tom?

Co-worker TOM, who has been listening in, swivels over from the other side.

TOM
Sorry, Nancy, I don't. I mean, I do vaguely remember some guy who worked over there--I think... but I'm not really sure.

KAY
How did he die anyway?

NANCY
Yeah, how did he die, Joy?

JOY's phone rings. She picks up.

JOY
Sales, can I help you?

VOICE
Is this Joy Jordan?

JOY
Yes.

VOICE
This is Stuart's mother.
(a beat.)
I hope you fucking rot in hell.

The VOICE hangs up.

TOM
Hey, Joy. Was he kind of Latino looking and a little acne-scarred?

NANCY
Yeah, you know, like Edward James Olmos?

JOY
(a beat.)
Yeah. Sure. That's him.

TOM
I knew it!

NANCY, KAY, and TOM continue discussing and disputing STUART's identity.

INT. HAPPY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

HELEN and TRISH sit together.

HELEN
(picking at her food)
Uch. I don't know why I suggested this place. Joy recommended it...

TRISH
Well, at least we're together. I never get to see you, you're so busy.

HELEN
No, you're so busy.

TRISH
No, you are...

HELEN
Well, I guess I am.

TRISH
Me too.

HELEN
In fact, if I have to do one more interview...

TRISH
I guess it's hard, all this success.

HELEN
It's just I'm so tired of...of being admired all the time. All these men...I mean, they're all beautiful, artistic minds, great sex, the whole package...but hollow, you know what I mean? I feel nobody's really honest with me. Nobody wants me for me.

TRISH
They're not family.

HELEN
Oh, Trish. If only I had your life--husband, kids, carpool...

TRISH
Well, I may "have it all," but sometimes I wonder what my life would have been like if I'd actually tried to write a novel.

HELEN
Oh, I'm sure it would have been good.

TRISH
Maybe I will write one.

HELEN
Oh, you should...Just try...

Pause.

TRISH
No, I don't need that kind of success.

HELEN
Uch, listen to us. We who have everything while Joy...What does she have?

TRISH
You're right. And she's just getting older.

HELEN
Last night she called--I was in bed with Vilmos--no, Huraki--and she was in tears. She told me she'd quit her job...

TRISH
Oh, but...but that's her lifeline!

HELEN
She said she wanted to "change" her life. Do "good," work with the poor, the needy...

TRISH
I don't get it.

HELEN
Don't even try. She doesn't understand she already <u>is</u> good. She doesn't need to <u>do</u> good.

TRISH
And what about her music career?

HELEN
I don't know, but don't hold your breath. Anyway, listen. This is all top secret. She doesn't want anyone to know.

TRISH
Oh.
(a beat.)
But she told you.

HELEN
She felt she could trust me.

TRISH
'Cause I always thought I was someone she could confide in.

A BUSBOY comes by, refills their water glasses, leaves.

TRISH
Did you speak to Mom?

HELEN
You mean about the split-up?

TRISH
Oh. I-I thought it was top secret.

HELEN
Just for Joy. Sensitive Joy. Everyone else knows.

TRISH
Oh.

A WAITER comes by.

WAITER
Can I help you with anything else?

HELEN
Oh, no thanks.

The WAITER leaves the check, clears the plates, goes off. TRISH picks up the check, looks at it.

HELEN
Thanks for lunch. I really enjoyed this.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A little league game is in progress. 11-year-old JOHNNY is at bat. There is a hush. Bases are loaded. BILLY encourages him from the sidelines.

BILLY
You can do it, Johnny!

JOE, JOHNNY's father and the team's coach, mutters to himself, tense.

JOE
Don't fuck up, Johnny.

BILL observes JOHNNY's TEAMMATES muttering to themselves:

TEAMMATE #1
I can't believe he's up at bat now.

TEAMMATE #2
I swear, I'm not playing Little League next year if he's on the team.

RONALD FARBER, the biggest and perhaps dumbest of the teammates, joins in:

RONALD
Let's beat him up afterwards.

JOHNNY concentrates. The pitcher throws the ball and...STRIKE!

BILLY
C'mon Johnny!

JOE
My kid is a fucking spaz.

TEAMMATE #2
Do we have to stay and watch this?

Strike two.

BILLY
Concentrate, Johnny! You can do it!

JOE
You hit the fucking ball or I'm gonna smash your fucking face in.

PARENT #1
(to BILL)
You know, this really is unfair to the other kids.

Strike three.

INT. MCDONALD'S - DAY

While BILLY and JOHNNY play video games, BILL and JOE eat at a table.

JOE
Bill, I dunno. Maybe I should talk to you. You're a specialist in these things, aren't you?

BILL
Well, I don't know. That depends...

JOE
Look, my son's a fag. I'm not blind to these things.

BILL
How come you're so sure he's...gay?

JOE
What, are you kidding?

BILL
Well, it's just sometimes...appearances can be deceiving. And besides. Even if you're right. There's not much you can do, is there?

Pause.

JOE
What do you think would happen if I got him a professional... you know...

BILL
A professional...?

JOE
Hooker. You know, the kind that can teach things...first-timers, you know...break him in...

BILL
But Joe, he's 11.

JOE
You're right, you're right. It's too late. He is...what he is. Forget I said anything.

BILL
Maybe you ought to discuss it with Betty.

JOE
I can't. I can't talk to her.

BILL
Hmm. That's a problem.

JOE
Things aren't too good between us...

BILL
Not too good.

JOE
No.

Pause.

BILL
Are you...?

JOE
No.
(a beat.)
She's a dyke.

BILLY and JOHNNY approach.

BILLY
Dad, can Johnny sleep over tonight?

BILL
Well, that's up to Joe here.

JOHNNY
Daddy, may I please sleep over Billy's tonight?

JOE
(pause)
Sure. Whatever.

JOHNNY AND BILLY
Yeah!!!

JOHNNY and BILLY hold each other as they jump for joy.

JOE
(to himself)
Like girls.

EXT. BILL'S PLACE - NIGHT

The lights are on. The TV is on.

The family can be heard laughing and playing some board game.

INT. BILL'S PLACE - NIGHT

BILL is preparing hot fudge sundaes. He mixes some powdered drugs into the fudge before pouring it onto the ice cream.

He brings a tray loaded with bowls of sundaes into the TV room.

BILL
Come and get it!

TRISH
Oh, Bill. You shouldn't have.

BILL
Here, take. You only live once.

Everyone grabs a bowl, except JOHNNY.

BILL
Aren't you having, Johnny?

JOHNNY
No, thank you, Dr. Maplewood.

BILLY
Johnny hates chocolate fudge.

BILL
Well, is there something you'd like instead?

JOHNNY
No, thank you.

BILL
What about to drink?

TRISH
Oh, leave him alone. He's fine.

BILL
No, but there must be something...

JOHNNY
Do you have any grape Hi C?

BILL
Do we, Trish?

TRISH
I'm afraid not.

BILL
I can go pick some up.

TRISH
Bill, don't be silly. He doesn't need anything. It's late.

JOHNNY
Do you have any tuna salad?

BILL
Would you like a sandwich?

JOHNNY
Yes, please.

BILL
Coming right up!

TRISH
I'm going to bed, Bill.

BILL
I'll be there soon!

TRISH
Look at that Timmy, can hardly keep his eyes open. Come on, Timmy.
(to BILLY and JOHNNY)
You boys, don't stay up too late!

TRISH shuffles off with little CHLOE and TIMMY.

BILL returns to the kitchen, hastily fixes a tuna sandwich, spiking it with gobs of his powder.

BILL brings the sandwich in to JOHNNY. He finds BILLY already fallen asleep.

BILL
Here we are!

JOHNNY
Thanks, Dr. Maplewood.

BILL
What happened to Billy?

JOHNNY
I don't know. I guess he just conked out.

JOHNNY is glued to the TV. He doesn't touch the tuna sandwich.

BILL
Aren't you going to eat the sandwich?

JOHNNY
In a minute.

BILL
Take your time.

BILL waits.

JOHNNY
Dr. Maplewood, would it be alright if I ate this tomorrow?

BILL
(not losing his self-control)
Well, sure, but I don't know if it'll taste any good tomorrow.

JOHNNY examines the sandwich. He turns back to the TV. Just when all seems lost, however, he takes a bite.

BILL
How is it?

JOHNNY
Actually, it's really good.

BILL
Enjoy it.

BILL then rises, checks in on TRISH, CHLOE, and TIMMY: they are all sound asleep.

BILL pauses in the hallway to look at a family portrait. Then he returns to the TV room.

BILL
(testing)
Johnny? Johnny?

But JOHNNY too is now sound asleep. BILL takes away the unfinished tuna sandwich and plate and brings them into the kitchen. He dumps the tuna remains into the garbage, puts the plate into the dishwasher, turns it on.
BILL lifts BILLY up and carries him off to bed. He tucks him in.

Bill returns to the TV room, where JOHNNY lies. He places him on the couch, then stands hovering over him.

The TV is left on.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - MORNING

The gardener is mowing the lawn. A postman drops off the mail. Little children play ball.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - MORNING

TIMMY, BILLY, and JOHNNY are in the TV room watching TV.

TRISH snuggles in bed next to BILL. They are very kissy-kissy.

TRISH
Oh, Honey. I feel so good now.

BILL
Me too.

TRISH
I haven't slept so well in so long.

BILL
Me neither.

TRISH
It's weird. I feel as if we...Bill, did we? I mean, did you...Did I...?

BILL
Yes.

Pause.

TRISH
I don't remember...

BILL
That's okay. It doesn't matter.

Pause.

TRISH
It matters.

BILL
Forget about it.

TRISH
Okay.
(a beat.)
It's funny, 'cause I remember I was dreaming and you were there... and Billy...and Timmy and Chloe... and Johnny Grasso...

BILL
Oh?

TRISH
I can't really remember anything more, except...I don't know. Oh, Bill.

TRISH (CONT'D)
Please don't get mad at me,
I know you hate it when I ask,
but...Do you still...?

BILL
Oh.

TRISH
Oh.

Pause.

BILL
Yes. Very very much.

TRISH
Oh, Bill, and I do too! I'm sorry
I need to keep being reminded,
it's just...

BILL
I know.

TRISH
And we haven't been...

BILL
I know. And it's my fault.

TRISH
My fault.

BILL
Trish, I-.

TRISH
I know.

BILL
No, I...I-.

Just when things get hot and heavy, CHLOE starts screaming o.s.

Pause.

TRISH
(kisses him.)
Later.

She rises and leaves the room.

INT. BILL'S KITCHEN - DAY

JOHNNY sits at the table with the funnies. BILL is sipping coffee, reading the paper.

TIMMY runs around in the b.g.

BILL
Where's Billy?

JOHNNY
Watching TV.

BILL
How come you're not playing together?

JOHNNY
I don't know. Billy just said he didn't feel like it.
(a beat.)
Dr. Maplewood?

BILL
Yes?

JOHNNY
Can you drive me home now?

BILL
Well, sure, but...are you not having a good time?

JOHNNY
I'm not feeling so well.

BILL
What's the matter?

JOHNNY
I don't know. I think-.

He throws up on the funnies.

INT. CAR - DAY

BILL is driving JOHNNY home.

JOHNNY
Dr. Maplewood?

BILL
Yes, Johnny?

JOHNNY
I'm sorry I threw up.

BILL
Don't worry about it.

JOHNNY
'Cause I really had a good time.

BILL
Good. Billy did too. We all did.

BILL puts his arm around him affectionately. JOHNNY, very sleepy, leans in close against him.

JOHNNY
Dr. Maplewood?

BILL
Yes, Johnny?

JOHNNY
You're so cool.

And he falls asleep, his head sinking into BILL'S lap.

A string of saliva drips from JOHNNY's lips onto BILL's pants.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

The lights are on. The TV is on.

INT. TV ROOM - LATER

BILLY joins BILL on the sofa. KOOKI is humping a chair across from them.

BILLY
Dad?

BILL
Yes, Billy?

BILLY
I was kind of wondering.

BILL
Yes?

Pause.

BILLY
Nothing.

Pause.

BILL
Did you have a good time with Johnny?

BILLY
It was okay. He's a little girlish, though.

BILL
Oh. Yeah.

Pause.

BILLY
Dad, Do you know how many inches your penis is?

Pause.

BILL
I never measured.

BILLY
Ronald Farber said his penis is twelve inches long. Do you think that's possible?

BILL
What Ronald Farber doesn't know is that it's not length, but width that matters.

Pause.

BILLY
Why?

BILL
Things get a little more...intense.

Pause.

BILLY
What do you mean...intense?

Pause.

BILL
Have you been...practicing?

BILLY
...Yeah. But it's no use. Nothing comes.

BILL
You have to be patient. Your friend Ronald Farber, I can assure you, is full of crap.

BILLY
Yeah. I bet yours is a lot wider and longer.

Pause.

BILL
Do you want me to measure?

BILLY
Nah, that's okay.

BILLY smiles, leans affectionately against his father.

INT. ESL OFFICE - DAY

Through the glass door a group of newly-arrived immigrants can be seen walking by.

SUPERVISOR looks JOY over.

SUPERVISOR
You've come at a good time. The place is in turmoil now. Everyone's preparing to strike.

JOY
W-why are they going to strike?

SUPERVISOR
I can't tell you the half of it: the deceit, the corruption. The union wants to close down the school. They don't care about these poor immigrants. It's heartbreaking. Now I believe in unions, I'm sensitive to their needs, I cried at "The Grapes of Wrath", I sing to Woody Guthrie. But that was another time, another place. Today unions are just a new kind of cor-

SUPERVISOR
poration. It's tragic, but believe me, those teachers making sacrifices for the union, well, the union's not going to make any sacrifices for them. Those union leaders, they go home with pay-checks, the teachers end up with nothing. Now we need people who can be dedicated, who aren't in it just for the money. Because this job takes courage.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
Do you know what some of these refugees have endured? Concentration camps. And now their dream of coming to America is realized, and this union doesn't care. It's all about greed. Selfishness. Now Joy, can I count on you?

JOY
O-of course...I want to do the right, um, thing...I mean, I believe in, um, you know...being counted on...

SUPERVISOR
Do you know what these strikers are? Spoiled brats. Trust-funded artistes. They don't know the meaning of work, of giving...But just remember, if you hear the word "benefits," don't listen.

EXT. ESL SCHOOL - DAY

PICKETERS march along the sidewalk. JOY approaches and hesitates.

PICKETERS
(chanting)
Don't cross the line! Don't cross the line!

JOY
You know, there are some people in real need in there.

PICKETER #1
Fucking management is in there.

JOY
But what about the refugees?

PICKETER #2
What about my benefits?

JOY
I'm sorry. I think you're making a terrible mistake.

As she crosses the picket line they shout epithets at her. Someone throws an egg at her. It cracks against her head. She runs inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Strangers look askance at JOY. When the elevator arrives at her floor she gets out, relieved.

INT. ESL SCHOOL TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY

Administrators welcome JOY, handing out general information. The air is festive.

JOY finds the other TEACHERS cleaning tomatoes and egg off their clothes. RHONDA, a teacher, pulls her aside towards a window from which the strikers can be seen.

RHONDA
It's so sad. I mean, it really is pathetic. Such losers. Really, I feel sorry for them.

There is a slight commotion across the room. TEACHER #1 is upset, crying a little. TEACHER #2 comforts her.

TEACHER #1
I'm sorry...It's nothing...Sorry...

TEACHER #2
It's okay.

TEACHER #1
It's just...well...

TEACHER #2
What is it? What happened?

TEACHER #1
...They called me a scab.

TEACHER #2
You are not a scab. You're a strike-breaker.

The bell rings.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

JOY enters. The STUDENTS do not have welcoming faces.

JOY
Good morning. My name is Joy Jordan.

She writes her name on the blackboard.

JOY
I am your new teacher. Now.

JOY is about to do roll-call when:

STUDENT #1
You are scab.

STUDENT #2
Where Marsha?

JOY
Marsha? Well, Marsha...er...

STUDENT #3
We want Marsha.

The STUDENTS start chanting, "We want Marsha!" One student, however, does not join in. He shouts at his classmates:

BORIS
(in Russian)
Quiet!

They listen to him.

BORIS
(to JOY)
Please.

JOY
...I am not a scab. I am a strike-breaker.

INT. HELEN'S PLACE - DAY

Intensity grips HELEN as she works on a poem at her desk. She rises, as if in pain, and starts pacing. Strange sounds emanate from her mouth. She pounds a fist against her head. Finally she leaps into bed, thrashing about as if possessed.

HELEN
I'm no good! I'm no good! I am nothing! Nothing! Zero!...

The telephone rings.

HELEN
Hello?

INT. ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

ALLEN is on the other end of the line. His breathing is heavy, low, constrained. He is sweating.

HELEN (V.O.)
...Hello?

ALLEN
(voice disguised)
I know who you are and you are nothing. You think you are fucking something, but you are fucking nothing. You are empty. You are zero. You are a black hole, and I am going to fuck you so bad you're gonna be coming out of your ears.

Pause.

HELEN (V.O.)
...Richard?

ALLEN hangs up.

INT. HELEN'S PLACE - DAY

HELEN presses *69.

CUT BACK AND FORTH between HELEN and ALLEN.

ALLEN picks up.

ALLEN
Data Resources.

HELEN
Who are you?

ALLEN hangs up. He is shaking, sweating profusely.

A pretty young SECRETARY walks by outside his glass door and smiles. He smiles back, weakly.

The phone rings again. ALLEN resists answering it until he hears his answering service pick up.

ALLEN
What do you want?

Pause.

HELEN
I want you to fuck me.

Pause.

ALLEN
I...um...I don't think I can do that...I mean...I don't think I can do that.

(a beat; a CO-WORKER is approaching.)

I gotta go.

HELEN
Call me tomorrow.

ALLEN
...Okay.

ALLEN hangs up. The CO-WORKER appears.

CO-WORKER
Hey, you see the play-offs last night?

ALLEN
(smiling/joking)
Yeah, pretty good! Pretty good!

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - EVENING

ALLEN hurries inside.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - EVENING

ALLEN buys some whiskey.

EXT. HELEN AND ALLEN'S APT. COMPLEX - EVENING

ALLEN bumps slightly over the curb as he pulls into the parking lot.

INT. APT. LOBBY - EVENING

ALLEN goes to the elevator, sees HELEN waiting. As usual, she pays him no attention. ALLEN smiles.

ALLEN
How's it going?

HELEN
Okay.

The elevator arrives and they step inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

HELEN and ALLEN stand and say nothing during the ride, like before.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

The elevator doors open and HELEN and ALLEN come out, walking their separate ways.

ALLEN
See ya.

HELEN
Yeah.

KRISTINA'S POV

of ALLEN unlocking and entering his apartment. The view is distorted.

CLOSE ON KRISTINA

in her apartment, staring through the peephole. She takes her eyes away and covers them with her hand, overcome.

EXT. APT. BUILDING - LATER

HELEN and her lover JAMAL's silhouettes can be seen going at it next door to ALLEN.

INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - THAT MOMENT

ALLEN, surrounded by a couple of empty liquor bottles, is studying a Playboy centerfold. Faint but distinct sounds of HELEN making love with someone.

The door buzzes. He puts down the magazine, rises unsteadily, and walks to the door.

ALLEN
Who is it?

KRISTINA (O.S.)
It's me. Kristina.

ALLEN opens the door.

KRISTINA
Hey, how's it going?

ALLEN
Okay.

KRISTINA
I got some more info on Pedro.

ALLEN
Pedro?

KRISTINA
You know...the, uh-.

ALLEN
Oh, yeah. What?

KRISTINA
Well, um...
(sees ALLEN tottering)
Say, uh, are you alright?

ALLEN
No.

KRISTINA
Here.

KRISTINA helps ALLEN back inside, sets him down on his bed.

ALLEN
...Pussy...Need pussy...

ALLEN passes out.

KRISTINA goes to the door and locks it. She turns out the light. Then she sits down and just stares at ALLEN, pondering his face and body.

Finally, KRISTINA bends down and unbuttons his top a little. She leans her head against ALLEN, half lying down beside him.

Suddenly ALLEN awakens, rises, and rushes off to the bathroom. He throws up o.s. Pause. When he reappears he sees KRISTINA standing by the bed.

ALLEN
What the fuck are you doing here?

KRISTINA is too petrified to speak.

ALLEN
Get out!

KRISTINA leaves.

EXT. FLORIDA/ARIZONA REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY

Sunny. Well-tended landscaping. Attractive parking lot.

INT. FLORIDA/ARIZONA REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY

MONA is sitting in the waiting room when ANN, a young and comely broker, appears.

ANN
Hi. Ann Chambeau.

MONA
Mona Jordan.

ANN
Wonderful.
(shakes hands with MONA.)
Come this way. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting so long.

ANN escorts MONA to her office. They sit down.

ANN
Can I get you some tea? coffee?

MONA
No, thank you.

ANN
Okay. Now then. How can I help you?

MONA
You said there might be something available over in Elysian Fields?

ANN
Actually, there are several places we can see there. But first I need a little information.
(starts typing into her computer.)
Now, you're looking for a one? two? three-bedroom?

MONA
Three.

ANN
Wonderful. Is this then for you and your husband?

MONA
No.

ANN
Just for yourself then?

MONA
Yes.

ANN
No children?

MONA
My children are grown.

ANN
No pets?

MONA
No.

ANN
So really just you alone then all by yourself?

MONA
Yes.

ANN
Wonderful.

ANN resumes interfacing with the computer.

Suddenly MONA starts crying. Soon Ann looks up from her terminal.

ANN
Mrs. Jordan? Is something the matter?

MONA nods yes and no. Finally:

MONA
My husband is leaving me.

ANN
Oh, I'm so sorry.

ANN reaches her hand out in a vague display of support and affection.

ANN
You know, we have a lot of divorcees in Phase IV. Would you like to see something there, perhaps a bit smaller?

MONA
Who said I was getting divorced?

EXT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - DAY

ANN drives MONA through this scenic luxury village. They pause at a security checkpoint before looking for a spot in the parking lot.

Easy Listening or Classical Lite is on the car radio.

ANN (V.O.)
You know, I'm a divorcee.

MONA (V.O.)
Oh?

ANN (V.O.)
I live in Phase IV.

INT. ANN'S CAR - DAY

MONA turns to ANN as she pulls into a spot.

MONA
I am so sorry.

ANN
Mrs. Jordan?

MONA
Mona.

ANN
Mona. That's a beautiful name.

MONA
Er...thank you.

ANN
How long were you married?

MONA
Forty years.

Pause.

ANN
You know, Mona, I think we have a lot in common. More than you realize. See, I know what your'e going through. I've been there. But I'd like to share a little secret with you: Divorce was the best thing that ever happened to me.

ANN reaches out and this time touches MONA, gives her a squeeze.

ANN
Really.

INT. CONDO LOBBY - DAY

ANN and MONA walk across the expensively decorated space. It is empty except for an OLD LADY with a walker tottering by.

ANN
(whispering discreetly)
Don't worry. She's the exception to the rule. Most everyone here is much more youthful.

INT. CONDO HALLWAY - DAY

ANN leads MONA towards the door of the place for sale. They pass by a vase of flowers resting in an offset little alcove.

While ANN searches for the right set of keys, a MAID approaches with fresh flowers and a plastic garbage bag. She dumps the old flowers in the bag and replaces them with new ones.

ANN
See how they change the flowers every day. They don't wait for things to go bad and rot here.

INT. CONDO - DAY

ANN stands to the side while MONA wanders around. The place is bright and sunny. A lot of mirrors and glass.

In each room she enters MONA sees her reflection.

ANN
It was finished just a year and a half ago and they've really hardly spent any time here. Supposedly the third bathroom's never even been used. But I've flushed it, so I know it works.

MONA stands by the windows, looking out.

ANN
The views are spectacular, of course. But what's great is you can see the whole world and at the same time feel entirely alone.

ANN (CONT'D)
It's kind of a double bonus: you get the solitude you need for reflection and soul-searching and the thrill of being "top of the heap."

MONA looks at a portrait of a couple hanging in the foyer. The husband has been torn out of it, just as he has been from all the other photographs lying around.

ANN
Now they're asking 800. But I know I can definitely get it down to 650. I know this couple. They're also in the middle of The Big D. He needs to liquidate fast.

Pause.

MONA
I'll take it.

ANN
Wonderful!

EXT. MONA AND LENNY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

LENNY lies on a chaise longue, alone by the poolside. DIANE, perhaps slightly younger than Mona, approaches.

DIANE
Hi, Lenny. Mind if I join you?

LENNY
No.

DIANE arranges herself in a chair beside him.

DIANE
How's Mona?

LENNY
Fine.

DIANE
Inside on such a beautiful day?

LENNY
I dunno.

DIANE
Whadya mean you dunno?

LENNY
I dunno.

DIANE
Eh. Whatever.
(a beat.)
So how are your girls doing?

LENNY
Fine, I guess.

DIANE
And the grandchildren? Coming to visit anytime soon?

LENNY
I dunno.

Pause.

DIANE
It's good to have a family together. A close family...I know. And you know I know. 'Cause you know I know what it's like when things aren't...together. When there is pain and loss and...separation. You know how I understand these things.
(a beat.)
Lenny, I just think you should know: I heard about you and Mona.

LENNY
What?

DIANE
About your...getting divorced. I'm very sorry.

LENNY
We're not getting divorced.

DIANE
Divorced, separated, whatever. It doesn't matter. You're alone now.

Two beautiful young women come to the pool and settle themselves down opposite.

LENNY looks at them. He closes his eyes and turns away.

DIANE
Anyway, if you ever need someone to talk to, I want you to know. I'm here. And I care.

JOHNNY'S POV OF JOE

pulling out of the driveway. Off to work.

INT. JOHNNY'S HOME - MORNING

Pulling up his pajama pants, JOHNNY rises from the toilet and turns to look at the bowl.

He leaves the bathroom without flushing the toilet.

He walks into his parents' bedroom. BETTY is walking around naked, getting dressed.

JOHNNY
Mom?

BETTY
Yeah?

JOHNNY
There's blood in my BM.
(BETTY freezes.)
Can I stay home from school today?

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A "National Children's Month" banner hangs outside across the entrance.

INT. JOHNNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A DETECTIVE is gently interrogating JOHNNY. BETTY sits beside him. JOE paces. A NURSE adjusts things. A DOCTOR examines charts. A POLICEMAN stands by the door.

DETECTIVE
How are you feeling?

JOHNNY
Okay.

DETECTIVE
You sure?

JOHNNY
Yeah. I feel fine. Maybe a little sore. But I'm ready to go back to school.

DETECTIVE
Good! Now, Johnny. I have to ask you a few questions. Is that okay?

JOHNNY
Yeah.

DETECTIVE
Good. Now then. When did you first start feeling sick?

JOHNNY
Yesterday.

DETECTIVE
What happened?

JOHNNY
I threw up at my friend's house.

BETTY
Johnny spent the night there. I thought he just had a little virus.

DETECTIVE
Did you eat anything unusual?

JOHNNY
No. Just a tuna sandwich.

BETTY
He loves tuna salad.

DETECTIVE
I see. And when did you first notice the blood?

JOHNNY
When I went to the bathroom this morning.

DETECTIVE
Now tell me--and it is very important that you be honest...

BETTY
Don't be afraid, Baby. I'm right here with you. Daddy's not going to touch you.

DETECTIVE
Is there anyone in the last day or two who...hurt you?

JOHNNY
(a beat.)
I don't think so.

DETECTIVE
But someone did...hurt you. No?

JOHNNY
(looks at JOE, then back to the DETECTIVE)
No. No one hurt me.

JOE
Whadya mean no?! You've been fucking raped!!

A stunned silence. JOE hangs his head.

JOE
Sorry.

Pause.

BETTY
Would you like me to fix you a tuna salad sandwich?

JOHNNY
Okay.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - EVENING

The family is at the dinner table.

TRISH
More potatoes, Bill?

BILL
Oh, no thanks. Mmm, I've got plenty.

TRISH
The babysitter should be here any minute now.

BILL
When does the PTA start?

TRISH
We've still got half an hour.

BILL
(to BILLY)
So how was school today?

BILLY
Okay.

BILL
Was Johnny there?

BILLY
No.

TRISH
I just hope none of you kids catch what he's got.

TIMMY tries amusing everyone by pretending to throw up his potatoes.

TRISH
Very funny, Timmy. And now you are excused and can go right to bed.

TIMMY
But Mom-!

TRISH
Excuse me, Bill.

But then the phone rings. TRISH lets go of TIMMY, answers it.

TRISH
Hello?...Yes, is there a problem, Tawny?...Well, thank you for giving me so much notice...Yes, well, I'm sorry, too. You should have thought of that earlier. Good-bye.

TRISH hangs up, returns to the table.

TRISH
Bill, you're going to have to go yourself tonight.

BILL
Isn't there anyone else you can get?

TRISH
Not at this late hour.

TRISH sees the mess TIMMY has been making with his potatoes and takes him away.

TRISH
(to TIMMY)
Now you can come with me and take a bath.

TIMMY
But I'm not finished!

TRISH and TIMMY continue to argue o.s.

BILLY
Dad? If you and Mom died in a plane crash, would it be alright if I took over?

BILL
Well, probably one of your aunts would want to help out.

BILLY
So you don't think I'm old enough to take care of myself and Timmy and Chloe.

BILL
Well, no.

BILLY
Ronald Farber's parents are away in Europe for a few days, and he's staying home alone without a baby-sitter. Why do I need a babysitter?

BILL
Well, if you want to change Chloe's diapers...

BILLY
If I didn't have any little brother or sister, would you let me stay alone by myself for a few days?

BILL
Your Mom and I are not Mr. Mrs. Farber. We worry. So no.

BILLY
What if I were 12?

BILL
No.

BILLY
13.

BILL
(a beat.)
At 13, I think you'll be okay.

BILLY
Can you promise?

BILL
As long as you don't still look like you're 11.

BILLY
I won't.

BILL
Okay. At 13, then.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

BILL backs out of the garage and comes to the end of the driveway.

INT. BILL'S CAR - NIGHT

BILL looks tense as he pauses before the intersection. He picks up his car phone and dials information.

BILL
Hello, in Roseland, please. I'm looking for the address of a resident. The name is Farber...12 Angel Court?...Thank you.

He hangs up. A sigh. Suddenly the phone rings. He answers it.

BILL
Hello?

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

TRISH is on the phone in the kitchen, cleaning up. CHLOE in the b.g.

TRISH
Hi, hon. It's me. Listen, I forgot to ask if you could pick up a half-gallon of skim milk on your way back from the meeting.

BACK TO BILL

on his car phone.

BILL
Sure thing.

TRISH (V.O.)
Thanks! Love ya!

BILL

Love ya!

He hangs up. Pause. He steps on the gas.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Bill's car moves on, joining the traffic.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

The parking lot is busy. Bill's car approaches, pauses.

BILL'S POV

of people parking and walking inside the school. Chatter is audible.

Someone waves hello at him in passing.

INT. BILL'S CAR - NIGHT

BILL is suffering. But finally he decides to move on.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

A street sign reads, ANGEL COURT. Bill's car nears and turns, slowly.

EXT. FARBER HOME - NIGHT

A modern expensive house of the sort that, in this neighborhood, makes an architectural "statement." The number 12 is illuminated over the front door, as is a plaque reading, The Farbers.

RONALD's silhouette can be faintly seen watching TV.

Bill's car pauses in front, then parks further down the block.

INT. BILL'S CAR - NIGHT

BILL sits, numb.

He pulls out from his pocket a handkerchief and a dark little unlabeled bottle filled with some liquid.

He looks at the car clock.

Finally, he opens his door.

EXT. FARBER HOME - NIGHT

BILL sneaks over to the side of the house and looks through the window.

INT. FARBER HOME - NIGHT

RONALD is lounging on the sofa, still watching TV. He snacks on some chips.

BILL slides into the house through a kitchen window.

He tiptoes to a corner round which he can see the back of RONALD's sofa, across the room.

The phone rings. BILL freezes. RONALD answers it.

RONALD
Hello?...Oh, hey, how's it going?... No, Billy Maplewood's selling me his...Five bucks, big deal...Yeah, I know, but Grasshole can't stay absent forever. He'll probably show up tomorrow...Yeah, he knows he's got it coming, he knows...Oh, okay. Yeah...Bye.

BILL pours the bottled liquid onto the handkerchief.

He pounces on the victim. Within moments, RONALD succumbs, unaware of his assailant's identity.

BILL looks around: the TV is still on; otherwise, silence.

He looks at RONALD, looks away.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. 7-11 - NIGHT

BILL buys a half-gallon of milk. He sees ALLEN riffling through some porn at the magazine rack, but slips out of the store unnoticed.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

Bill's car pulls into the garage.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

BILL takes a half-gallon of milk out of a plastic bag and puts it in the refrigerator.

TRISH (O.S.)
Hon, is that you?

BILL
Yeah.

TRISH (O.S.)
You remember the milk?

BILL
Yeah.

BILL walks by the TV room where TRISH is sitting watching TV alone, like Ronald Farber: same position, same channel.

TRISH
How was the meeting?

BILL
Okay.

TRISH
Bill, are you alright?

BILL
I think I have to lie down.

TRISH
Oh, shit. I hope you're not coming down with whatever that Johnny boy had.

BILL
I don't think so.

BILL stops by BILLY's room. Back issues of Boy's Life lie piled on his desk.

BILLY is asleep. A Playboy magazine sticks out from beneath his pillow.

BILL goes over to BILLY and bends down. He kisses him.

BILLY
Dad?

BILL
Yeah?

BILLY
I almost came.

BILLY closes his eyes again.

INT. BILL AND TRISH'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lights out. BILL lies awake, listening to TRISH's rhythmic breathing.

BILL
Trish?...Trish?

TRISH
...Mmmyeah?

Pause.

BILL
Do you love me?

TRISH
Oh, Bill...Yes.

BILL
I mean, do you really love me?
No matter what.

TRISH
No matter what...what?

BILL
No matter...whatever...

TRISH
Bill. You have me. And you always
will.

She holds him closer. A long pause.

BILL
I'm sick...

TRISH
(barely awake)
Aww...Take some Tylenol. You'll
feel better tomorrow.

EXT. STREET - DAY

JOY walks along, despondent. Suddenly she hears a Russian-accented voice calling her. She looks around and sees a cab pulled up beside her. BORIS is inside.

BORIS
Joy! Joy! I am Boris! Your student!

JOY
Oh, hello, Boris. How are you?

BORIS
I am fine. How are you?

JOY
Oh, fine, fine.

Pause.

BORIS
I not believe you.

JOY
Really, Boris. I'm fine!

BORIS sees JOY is holding back tears. He gets out of the cab.

BORIS
Where you are go now?

JOY
Oh, I'm just on my way home.

BORIS
Tell me where do you live. I take you home.

JOY
Oh, no, I couldn't.

BORIS
Joy. Come in my car. I want give you ride.

JOY
But I like walking. And the train is right nearby.

BORIS
No. No train. I drive you home.

JOY
But Boris. I live in New Jersey!

BORIS
Good. I take you New Jersey.

JOY
Maybe you don't understand. Boris.
New Jersey is far.

BORIS
Joy. You not understand. I am driver.
My taxi. You come. You understand?
You come.

Pause.

JOY
Are you sure you know...?

BORIS
Boris knows. Come inside.

BORIS opens the door for JOY. She gets in. BORIS takes off.

INT. CAB - DAY

They sit in the bumper-to-bumper traffic. JOY turns to BORIS, turns away. MUSIC plays on the radio. Suddenly she starts sobbing.

JOY
I'm sorry...

BORIS
Don't worry. Soon will be in New
Jersey.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY - EVENING

The MUSIC on the radio swells as BORIS's taxi speeds along. They pass a Welcome to New Jersey sign.

INT. CAB - EVENING

JOY changes radio stations. They listen. BORIS changes back.

EXT. MCDONALD'S - EVENING

BORIS and JOY share a little meal along the highway. The MUSIC FADES.

INT. MCDONALD'S - EVENING

BORIS and JOY sit in a booth. They eat in silence. Finally:

BORIS
I love New Jersey.

Pause.

JOY
Don't you miss Russia?

BORIS
Fuck the cunt of Russia.

Pause.

JOY
Well, I guess it's best to feel that way.

EXT. JOY'S PLACE - NIGHT

BORIS's cab arrives, parks in front.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

JOY turns to BORIS.

JOY
Well, thank you very much. That really was very nice of you. I'm sorry about before...um...it's very unlike me...
(a beat.)
So do you think you'll need any help finding your way back?

BORIS is silent. He stares off at her place.

BORIS
Why you not married?

JOY
Oh, Boris. Life is different in America. Here a woman can--I know this is hard to understand--but a woman can fulfill her potential. There are opportunities here to do something, do good...really improve the world...

Pause.

BORIS
Do you like men?

JOY
(a beat.)
Yes...but...it's not so simple.

BORIS
Are you lesbian?

JOY
(a beat.)
No.

BORIS
It is alright if you are lesbian.
I like lesbians.

JOY
I'm sorry, Boris. But I think this conversation has become a little strange for me. Thank you for the ride, and...um...

JOY extends her hand for a handshake, but BORIS kisses her.

JOY
Oh. Well...um...good night then.
I guess I'll see you-.

But BORIS grabs her for another, longer kiss instead. Pause.

JOY
Would you like to come inside for a cup of tea?

BORIS
(a beat.)
Okay.

INT. JOY'S PLACE - NIGHT

Darkness. The sound of a key jiggling. A lock unbolted. Finally the door opens and they walk inside. JOY turns on the lights. An awkward pause.

JOY
I'll turn on the kettle.

She goes to the stove. Turning back she observes BORIS take off his shoes.

JOY
Yes, well...um...please take off your shoes. Make yourself comfortable.

BORIS wanders around, observing. JOY feels a little uncomfortable.

JOY
It's my parents' place. I plan on moving out soon, though.

BORIS
How long you live here?

JOY
Since I was born. But really, there are a lot of advantages to not moving.
(a beat.)
So what did you do in Russia?

BORIS
I was thief.

JOY
Oh. Do you mean...the mafia?

BORIS
No. I am independent. I steal things on my own. Although I have many offers.
(sees JOY's guitar.)
You are musician?

JOY
Oh, no, not really. I just write songs a little.

BORIS
What kind songs?

JOY
Oh, I don't know. They're all so terrible.

BORIS
(a nod of understanding.)
Love songs.
(a beat.)
Play.
(JOY shakes her head, terrified.)
I play.

BORIS begins playing and singing a song, perhaps an Olivia Newton-John love ballad. He sings with intense emotion. When he finishes, the kettle whistles.

JOY brings the teapot to the table and pours for herself and BORIS. BORIS comes to his place and drops a half dozen teaspoons of sugar into his tea.

They sit and drink tea. Then:

JOY
Would you like to see my macrame collection?
(BORIS looks confused.)
Come. Follow me.

She leads him into her bedroom to her showcase of macrame dolls, pillows, and assorted knickknacks.

BORIS
(impressed)
You make?

JOY
Uh huh.

BORIS
All by yourself?

JOY
Uh huh.

Pause.

BORIS
Beautiful.

JOY
Thank you. I-I know it might seem childish, but sometimes I like to play with them and make up stories. These two here--
(lifts a pair of figurines)
I call them Chuckle and Giggle. They always make me laugh...

BORIS
You should build store. Start business.

JOY
Oh-h-h...

BORIS
(points to a doll)
This? Two hundred dollars. Easy.

JOY
Oh, but that's Punky! I could never sell Punky.

JOY (CONT'D)
I could never sell any of this.

BORIS lifts Punky, puts it back, dirty now.

BORIS
(sorry)
Oh.

JOY
Don't worry. They're all machine washable.

BORIS
(smiles)
Ah. Machine washable.

JOY
(a beat.)
You know, your English is really very good. You should be in a higher level.

BORIS
(a beat.)
Your face is like love poem.

BORIS is very close to JOY. She lets him embrace her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOY'S PLACE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Out of the darkness we hear heavy breathing, sounds of nervous excitement
from JOY.

JOY and BORIS's figures emerge faintly from the darkness. They are in bed.

BORIS
Do not be actress. Relax. Boris here.

JOY quiets down. Then suddenly she cries out. A still pause.

BORIS
...Okay.

JOY
(a beat.)
Okay?

BORIS
(a beat.)
I go now.

BORIS gets out of bed. JOY listens to him gather his things, dress. Finally, the door opens. BORIS, her guitar, and perhaps some stereo equipment disappear. The door shuts.

EXT. ESL SCHOOL - DAY

JOY gets pelted with rubbish and epithets on her way inside, but she seems almost blissfully oblivious.

INT. JOY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

JOY arrives filled with hope, but when she sees that BORIS is absent, she can't help but be disappointed. Still, the class is pretty full, so she does roll call and begins her lesson.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

JOY sits alone at a table, perhaps wistful, or melancholy, and looks out the window. RHONDA joins her and she perks up.

RHONDA
How's it going?

JOY
Oh, hi, Rhonda!

RHONDA
Your students treating you okay?

JOY
Oh, they're just...great! And already I'm seeing improvement! But you know, the funny thing is... I feel it's me who's doing the most learning.

RHONDA
I know just what you mean. 'Cause teaching is really about learning.

JOY
Yeah...
(pause)
But really I can't tell you how... gratifying it's been...I mean, I'm giving...and they're taking. I couldn't be happier.

RHONDA
I hate to have to say this, but: I told you so.

JOY
How about you? How's it going with your class?

RHONDA
Oh, my students are just a hoot, always telling me how much they love me. But if you can keep a secret...
(lowers her voice)
There's this one Igor I've got such a crush on...

JOY
Oh?

RHONDA
Not that I'd ever...I mean, these Russians...

JOY
What?

RHONDA lifts her arm, points to her armpit, mouths "B.O."

JOY
Really? My students seem okay...

RHONDA
Well, then, you are lucky.

JOY
Yeah. I guess I'm lucky.

JOY'S POV THROUGH THE WINDOW

of the STRIKERS still marching out on the sidewalk.

BACK TO JOY AND RHONDA

gazing outside. Pause. RHONDA turns away from the window.

RHONDA
You know, Joy, just between you and me, I actually think the quality of teaching has gone up since the strike began.

JOY
Oh, well, I don't know. I just wish it were all over.

RHONDA
Me too. But you know, once you're here and you're teaching, it's as if it doesn't even exist. You forget.

Pause.

JOY
Rhonda?

RHONDA
Yes?

JOY
If your Igor...

RHONDA
...Used deodorant...

JOY
Do you think...?

A Russian woman, ZHENIA, suddenly interrupts, barging into the room. She stands before JOY looking very upset.

ZHENIA
You teacher Boris?

JOY
Er...Yes.

ZHENIA spits into JOY's face.

ZHENIA
Whore!

And she lunges for her, cursing in Russian. RHONDA, other TEACHERS, and SECURITY GUARDS get her off JOY and out of the room.

RHONDA
My God! That woman was nuts! Are you okay?

JOY
(somewhat shaken)
Oh, fine...Thank you...

A bell rings. TEACHERS, ET. AL. begin to disperse.

JOY gathers her stuff, RHONDA helping.

RHONDA
(whispers)
Joy, you didn't...did you?

Some TEACHERS pause to overhear JOY's anticipated reply. But it doesn't come.

INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - EVENING

ALLEN sits on his bed, tense and sweaty, gripping his phone.

INT. HELEN'S PLACE - EVENING

HELEN lies on her bed, strewn with poetry books and papers, concentrating on her phone.

The phone rings. She answers it. She hears only some faint breathing. For a while she says nothing.

INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - EVENING

ALLEN is on the phone with HELEN, saying nothing. Finally:

HELEN (V.O.)
Thank you for calling me again.
(no response.)
I'm sorry if I was a little bit...
aggressive last time, but...I wasn't...
prepared...and I'm not very good...
on the phone...But I have to...
meet you...Can we meet?...

ALLEN hangs up and unplugs the phone. Pause.

The door buzzes. ALLEN rises.

ALLEN
Who is it?

KRISTINA (O.S.)
Kristina.

ALLEN hesitates, then opens the door. Pause.

KRISTINA
I'm sorry about last night.

ALLEN
Yeah. Me too. I shouldn't have... um...

KRISTINA
I understand. See, I can admit it. I'm fat...ugly...

ALLEN
No, no...

KRISTINA
Yes, yes...

Tears are trickling down KRISTINA's face. ALLEN hands her a crumpled tissue.

KRISTINA
Thanks.

Pause.

ALLEN
Say, you wanna go somewhere?

KRISTINA nods, grateful.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

MUSIC flows outside.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

ALLEN and KRISTINA foxtrot by the jukebox.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

ALLEN and KRISTINA sit in a booth. They are eating.

KRISTINA
I have a confession to make.

ALLEN
Oh?

KRISTINA
Remember Pedro's penis?

ALLEN
You mean, the one that was...cut off?

KRISTINA
Yeah...well, it wasn't cut off.

ALLEN
What happened to it?

KRISTINA
(a beat.)
Nothing.

ALLEN
I-I don't understand. Why would you make something like that up?
(no response.)
Was Pedro even killed?

KRISTINA nods.

ALLEN
How do you know?
(no response.)
What happened?

Pause.

KRISTINA
Well, I'd always been very friendly to him. I try to be that way with all the doormen, even if they're usually snickering behind my back. But I don't care, I'm still friendly. It's my way. Well, Pedro was different. Pedro never snickered. Of course, who was he to snicker? He wasn't exactly Tom Cruise. Still, he could have, and he didn't. Well, anyway, one night...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

PEDRO opens the door for KRISTINA.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
...I had just come back late from the 24-hour Pathmark...

PEDRO
Good evening.

KRISTINA
Hello, Pedro. Do you think you could help me with these bags?

PEDRO
No problem.

PEDRO locks up and takes the bags from KRISTINA. They then walk to the elevator.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
Normally I don't need any help, but my back hurt and the bags were heavy. There was a half-gallon of strawberry ice cream and a couple boxes of fudge, a key lime pie... Really, I just couldn't wait to snuggle up under the covers and enjoy myself with the TV. You know...

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

PEDRO and KRISTINA get inside.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
It was in the elevator that I first got a funny feeling...like he was looking at me kind of funny...but I thought maybe he too was just being friendly...

They get off and walk to her apartment.

INT. KRISTINA'S PLACE - NIGHT

PEDRO follows KRISTINA inside, brings the groceries to the kitchen.

KRISTINA
Well, thank you so much, Pedro.

PEDRO
No problem.

There is an awkward pause.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
But then he wouldn't move. I almost panicked, but then I realized he probably was just waiting for a tip. So I got out my purse... and then he surprised me.

PEDRO
Forget about it. What I'd like is a scoop of this ice cream before going back down.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
Well, isn't that nice and friendly, I thought. Though I also thought, that's a little strange. I'm a little shy, you know, and also I had only one half-gallon. But I said, "Sure!" Well, then he sat down and started telling me about how he had no family, no friends... I started feeling really sorry for him...and I...Well, I guess I felt I shouldn't feel so superior. But then, all of a sudden, just as I was finishing scooping...

BACK TO ALLEN AND KRISTINA

in the restaurant.

KRISTINA
...He started...kissing me...more and more...and longer and deeper... it was horrible...horrible! Next thing I knew he tore off my dress, my...everything!...And he was climbing on top of me...He thought because I was fat and ugly I'd be...easy... that I...wanted it. I tried to fight him off, but he was too fast for me, and next thing I knew he was...inside me, pounding away. Oh, Allen!

KRISTINA grabs a napkin to cry into. Pause.

The WAITRESS comes by.

WAITRESS
All finished?

ALLEN
Yeah.

KRISTINA
I guess so.

WAITRESS
Would you like to see a dessert menu?

KRISTINA
What kind of ice cream do you have?

WAITRESS
Chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry.

KRISTINA
I'll just have a plain chocolate fudge sundae with strawberry ice cream.

WAITRESS
And you, Sir?

ALLEN
Just the check, please.

The WAITRESS smiles and leaves.

KRISTINA
So anyway, everything suddenly got quiet and I thought, well, at least the worst is over.

INT. KRISTINA'S PLACE - NIGHT

PEDRO lies on top of KRISTINA.

PEDRO
How do you feel now?

KRISTINA
Kiss me again.

KRISTINA (V.O.)
Well, of course, that was just an act. I let him kiss me one last time, and then...

BACK TO ALLEN AND KRISTINA

in the restaurant.

KRISTINA
...Grabbed hold of his neck and... twisted it...backwards.

The WAITRESS comes by with the dessert.

WAITRESS
Here you are.

KRISTINA
Thank you.
(while eating her sundae)
Anyway, so then I had to cut up his body, plastic bag all the parts... I've been throwing it out gradually ever since.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
There's still a little left in my freezer.

Pause.

ALLEN
So you did cut off his...

KRISTINA
No. I left it attached. I didn't want to have to touch it again.
(a beat.)
Oh, I feel so terrible. You must think I'm a monster. But what else could I have done?...Anyway, I couldn't help myself. I hate... sex. I'm sorry, but just the idea of it...of someone all over...inside...me...I know it's not right, but...Can we still be...friends?

ALLEN
Um...I guess...Yeah...I mean, we all have our...you know...pluses and minuses...

Pause.

KRISTINA
It was a crime of passion.
(a beat.)
I'm a passionate woman.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

ALLEN and KRISTINA come out of the elevator.

ALLEN
Well...

KRISTINA
I had a lovely time, Allen. Thank you. I hope we can do it again.

ALLEN
Good night.

KRISTINA
Good night.

ALLEN has entered his apartment and is about to close the door behind him, when KRISTINA suddenly interrupts:

KRISTINA
Oh, and Allen!

ALLEN
Yeah?

KRISTINA
You're a very good dancer.

ALLEN smiles weakly, then shuts his door, locking and double-bolting it. Pause. KRISTINA returns to her apartment.

INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - NIGHT

ALLEN stares at his telephone. Finally, he plugs it in. Instantly it rings. He answers it. At first, just breathing. Then:

HELEN (V.O.)
I've had you on auto-redial all night.

ALLEN hangs up and unplugs the phone again. He sits down and stares at it.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

ALLEN comes out of his apartment and walks bravely down towards HELEN's apartment. He stops outside her door. Pause. He buzzes.

A moment passes. ALLEN covers the peephole with his hand.

HELEN (O.S.)
Hello?

HELEN opens the door, sees ALLEN.

HELEN
Yes?

Pause.

ALLEN
I'm the one.

HELEN
I'm sorry?
(a beat.)
Oh.

She cannot disguise her disappointment, but tries.

HELEN
Come in.

ALLEN
Okay.

INT. HELEN'S PLACE - NIGHT

HELEN and ALLEN sit opposite each other. A long silence. Finally:

HELEN
Drink?

ALLEN
No...thanks.

Pause.

HELEN
This isn't working.

ALLEN
No.

HELEN
You're not my type.

ALLEN
No.

HELEN
I'm sorry.

ALLEN
It's okay.

HELEN
I made a mistake.

ALLEN
Me too.

HELEN escorts him out.

HELEN
Good night.

ALLEN
Good night.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

ALLEN walks back towards his door, pauses, looks at the other end of the hallway: he decides to go visit KRISTINA instead.

He buzzes KRISTINA's door.

After a few moments, the door opens. ALLEN looks at the ground. KRISTINA's eyes are full, her hands coated with M&M's. He walks inside.

INT. KRISTINA'S PLACE - NIGHT

ALLEN and KRISTINA lie in bed, facing different directions.

EXT. FLORIDA/ARIZONA GOLF COURSE - DAY

It is hot and sunny. LENNY is golfing alone, isolated.

Suddenly, from afar, he hears a woman's cries. He looks up.

LENNY'S POV

An older woman is running around, hysterical. An older man lies on the ground. Ambulance men haul him onto a stretcher and into a waiting ambulance.

After the ambulance has left, a young caddie picks up the strewn golf equipment and transports it away.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

LENNY sits across from the DOCTOR.

LENNY
Are you sure?

DOCTOR
Look, you see this?
(illuminates an x-ray)
You're the picture of health.

LENNY
So no tumors.

DOCTOR
Nope.

LENNY
...And my heart?

DOCTOR
Like an ox. Lenny. You're gonna live to a hundred.

LENNY
Oh. That means I still have another 35 years.

DOCTOR
(smiles)
Just stay off the salt!

LENNY
(musters a return smile)
You bet!

EXT. CONDO ROADWAY - DAY

MONA is driving along.

INT. MONA'S CAR - DAY

MONA notices someone up ahead.

MONA'S POV

of DIANE jogging.

BACK TO MONA

contemplating murder. She aims for DIANE. But as she gets closer, a SECURITY GUARD suddenly appears. She waves with a friendly smile at DIANE instead.

ANGLE ON DIANE

waving back in a pleasant manner.

INT. MONA AND LENNY'S CONDO - NIGHT

LENNY and MONA are preparing for bed, watching TV.

MONA
I met with Steven Zimmer this morning.

LENNY
You like him?

MONA
Yeah. I'm gonna hire him.

LENNY
Good. I'm gonna use Marty Blau.

MONA
Good. I feel so much better now.

LENNY
Yeah. It shouldn't take too long.

Pause.

MONA
Lenny?

LENNY
Yeah?

MONA
Can you sleep on the living room sofa?

LENNY
Why?

MONA
Steven Zimmer thought it would be a good idea.

Pause.

LENNY
Okay.

LENNY starts off for the living room, gets extra pillow and blanket. Pause. MONA then gets up and follows him into the living room.

MONA
Lenny?

LENNY
Yeah?

MONA
You don't have to sleep there. You can stay with me if you want.

LENNY
Nah. It's okay. Good night.

MONA
Good night.

Pause. MONA turns back towards her bedroom.

LENNY
Close the door behind you.

MONA closes the door behind her.

INT. DIANE'S CONDO - DAY

LENNY rings the doorbell. DIANE opens the door.

DIANE
Oh, hello.

LENNY
I thought I'd say hi.

DIANE
Please. Come in.

LENNY follows DIANE into her living room. She fixes a couple drinks, turns on a cd.

DIANE
Gin and tonic?

LENNY
Okay. Thanks.

She returns with the drinks, sits beside him on the sofa.

DIANE
Uch, it's so bright outside. It gives me a headache just looking out the window.

LENNY
It's supposed to rain tomorrow.

DIANE
I don't want to talk about the weather.

Pause.

LENNY
Well, it was good for playing golf.

DIANE
I hate that game. It's so slow and tedious.

LENNY
Still, it passes the time.

DIANE
I like to travel.

LENNY
I went to Europe once.

DIANE
Have you ever been to Tahiti?

LENNY
No.

DIANE
What about Tunisia? A night in Tunisia!

LENNY
No.

DIANE
Vincent never liked to travel.

LENNY
I guess I'm like Vincent.

DIANE
(laughs)
You know, when I was a child I always imagined I'd marry the man I fell in love with, have a son and daughter who loved me as much as I hated my mother, then die tragically and suddenly, young and beautiful. Later, when Vincent left me, I imagined I'd finally be happy.

LENNY
I guess you've never lost your imagination.

DIANE
Lenny, I've got to get out of here... I can't breathe...The women are all...pathetic gossips...and the men...

LENNY
...Just pathetic?

DIANE
I don't want to die here.

LENNY
You just don't want to die.

DIANE
Not alone.

They make love. Afterwards, LENNY turns away.

DIANE
Don't. Don't feel guilty.

LENNY turns back, looks at her.

LENNY
I don't. I don't feel anything.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - EVENING

The family is at the table, eating dinner.

BILL
So how was school today?

BILLY
Okay. Ronald Farber was absent.

BILL
Oh?

BILLY
He was afraid of the math test.

TRISH
So he stayed home?

BILLY
Yeah. He cut.

TRISH
Oh, that's terrible. His parents...

BILLY
They don't know yet. They're still on vacation.

TRISH
Oh, are they gonna be upset.

BILLY
Yeah, well, Ronald's gonna be upset when he finds out the test was canceled.

BILL
What happened?

BILLY
Mrs. Paley was absent also.

TRISH
(chuckles.)
Oh, gee!

BILL
Did you call Ronald and tell him?

BILLY
Yeah, but there was no answer.

TRISH
So was Mrs. Paley sick, then?

BILLY
Well, everyone says she was just too strung out.

TRISH
Now why do people say things like that?

BILLY
'Cause she's a drug addict.

TRISH
And how do you know?

BILLY
Mom. Everyone knows.

TRISH
Well, I didn't know. Did you know, Bill?

BILL
No.

BILLY
Well, it's what everyone says: she's a junkie. And she's probably gonna be fired. It's really sad.

TRISH
Well, if Mrs. Paley turns out, in fact, to be a junkie, then... she should be fired. Don't you think, Bill?

BILL
I don't know. Don't you think that's a little harsh? I mean, if it's not affecting her work...

TRISH
Well, apparently it is. And no, in fact, I don't think it's a little harsh at all. I'm sorry, but when it comes to drug abuse...and children, my children...Uch, they should all be locked up and throw away the key. I'm serious.

TRISH (CONT'D)
And Billy, I want you to know, if you ever even think of doing drugs, and end up dying in a hospital...I'd disown you. That's how strongly I feel. Now I know, Bill, I may sound harsh, but we're talking about our kids. Not to be too grandiose, but this is the future, the future of our country we're talking about, after all.

A pause. The telephone rings.

TRISH
I'll get it.
(answers the phone.)
Hello, who is this, please?...
Oh, hi...Sure, hold on...
(to BILL)
It's Joe Grasso.

BILL
Oh, great! Thanks!
(rises, picks up the phone)
Hey, Joe! What's up? How's Johnny doing?

INT. JOE'S PLACE - EVENING

JOE grips the telephone tightly.

JOE
You're a dead man.

He hangs up.

BACK TO THE MAPLEWOOD HOME

where we see BILL's reaction to the telephone CLICK.

BILL
(fakes continuing the conversation)
Oh, good, good...No problem!...
Right...Okay. Well, take care...
Bye!

TRISH
How's Johnny doing?

BILL
Oh, fine, fine! Much better!

TRISH
Good. 'Cause we bought those Beauty and the Beast tickets for this Saturday and I don't think Billy has anyone else...

BILL
(a weak chuckle.)
No, no...he didn't cancel...

The doorbell rings.

TRISH
Now who could that be?

BILL
I'll get it.

BILL goes to the front door.

BILL
Who is it?

VOICE
Police officer.

BILL opens the door. There is a DETECTIVE and TWO POLICE OFFICERS.

BILL
Can I help you?

DETECTIVE
Are you William Maplewood?

BILL
Y-yes.

DETECTIVE
Sorry to disturb you, but we have some questions for you and your wife. It has to do with your son's friend, Johnny Grasso.

BILL
Did something...?
(a meaningful silence.)
Come this way. We're just finishing dinner, but I-I'll be right with you.

BILL escorts them into the living room.

TRISH (O.S.)
Bill, who is it?

BILL goes to the dining room, mouths, "The Police!" to TRISH, so the children won't know.

BILL
You take care of the kids.

BILL returns to his guests. They all sit down. BILL is noticeably jittery.

BILL
Sorry. Now...um... you said something about Ronald Farber?

The DETECTIVE is nonplussed.

BILL
I'm sorry...er...I mean...I mean, Johnny Grasso?

INT. BILL AND TRISH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TRISH is asleep, but BILL is wide awake. He is terrified as he lies in bed, listening to the night sounds.

He thinks he hears footsteps.

He looks up and sees JOHNNY.

JOHNNY
You're so cool.

JOHNNY moves to embrace BILL, but then BILL suddenly jumps up in fright, awake again.

TRISH
(waking up)
Bill? Are you alright?

BILL holds onto TRISH, embracing her, shivering.

BILL
...Don't leave me...Please don't leave me...

TRISH comforts him.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - DAY

Holding TIMMY's hand, TRISH comes out the front door in her robe and slippers.

A schoolbus is waiting at the corner.

TRISH
(calling to the bus)
One second!
(calling inside)
Hurry up, Billy! The bus is here!

BILLY rushes out after them, but is too late: the bus has already taken off. Defeated, TRISH, BILLY, and TIMMY turn back to the house, then suddenly stop and look: the words "Rapist" and "Pervert" have been spray-painted onto their housefront.

EXT. PARK - DAY

It is sunny and warm, the same park seen in Bill's dream earlier in the movie. Couples straight and gay walk hand in hand, families picnic, beautiful people sunbathe.

BILL observes the pleasant tranquility from atop a hill. But this time he gently approaches everyone and starts hugging them. Many smiles and tears.

MUSIC SWELLS.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
Beautiful.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

BILL sits opposite his PSYCHIATRIST.

PSYCHIATRIST
That's a beautiful dream.

BILL
Thank you. I take it as a sign.

PSYCHIATRIST
Of...

BILL
Trish and I are thinking of moving. Out into the country. The real country.

PSYCHIATRIST
How are things between you and Trish?

BILL
(a beat.)
Never better.

PSYCHIATRIST
Oh?

BILL
I don't know what happened, but all of a sudden, one night last week we were watching TV and... she turned me on. The kids went to bed and...we fucked. And on the weekend...in the morning, too... we fucked. My life is just one big fuck!

BILL laughs, the PSYCHIATRIST chuckles.

PSYCHIATRIST
I'm happy to hear that.

BILL
Thanks. But you know it's strange... I mean how like...now...just like that...everything's normalized.

A long pause. Then BILL rises.

BILL
Well.

PSYCHIATRIST
There're still ten minutes. Nothing more you want to discuss?

BILL
No, I guess not. Everything's fine.

BILL walks towards the door, but stops before a photograph of a young boy hanging on the wall.

BILL
Was that you?

PSYCHIATRIST
Yeah.

BILL
Hmmmph. You've changed.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - EVENING

The family eats at the dinner table. No one talks. The mood is tense.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOME - NIGHT

While TRISH puts TIMMY and CHLOE to bed, BILL and BILLY sit on the couch in front of the TV.

BILLY
Dad?

BILL
Yes, Billy?

BILLY
Everyone at school is saying things about you.

BILL
Who is everyone?

BILLY
Kids. You know. Everyone.

BILL
What are they saying?

Pause.

BILLY
That you're a serial rapist.

BILL
Oh.

BILLY
And a pervert.

BILL
You mean, like what they painted on the house.

BILLY nods. Pause.

BILLY
Dad...did you...did you...with Johnny Grasso and Ronald Farber...?

Pause.

BILL
Yes.

Pause.

BILLY
What did you...do?

BILL
I...I touched them...

BILLY
Whadya mean exactly...touched...?

BILL
I...fondled them.

Pause.

BILLY
What for?

BILL
I couldn't help myself.

Pause.

BILLY
What else?

BILL
I unzipped myself...

BILLY
Do you mean...masturbated?

BILL
No.

BILLY
Then...what?

BILL
I...made love...

Pause.

BILLY
What does that...mean?

BILL
I fucked them.

Pause.

BILLY
What was it like?

BILL
It was...great.

Pause.

BILLY
Would you do it again?

BILL
Yes.

Pause.

BILLY
Would you ever fuck me?

BILL
No...I jerk off instead.

BILL weeps.

INT. BILL AND TRISH'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

BILL swallows half a dozen sleeping pills.

INT. BILL AND TRISH'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

BILL and TRISH lie awake.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - NIGHT

A car drives up and idles out front. DRUNKEN TEENAGERS laugh and curse as they throw beer bottles at the house. They quickly speed off.

INT. BILL AND TRISH'S BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

BILL and TRISH hear the sound of a window being shattered, but remain in bed.

BILL
It's true: I'm a pervert.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - DAYBREAK

TRISH carries CHLOE and a suitcase as she rushes BILLY and TIMMY out to the car. KOOKI follows along. The door slams behind them.

TIMMY
Mommy, I'm-!

TRISH
Shh! Quiet!

They get in the hastily packed car and drive off.

INT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - DAY

BILL wakes up. He gets out of bed and looks around. He sees drawers have been emptied and left open.

BILL

Trish?

He goes to CHLOE's room and sees just an empty crib. He checks BILLY and TIMMY's room: no one is there.

BILL

Billy? Timmy?

He searches the rest of the house, though somewhat perfunctorily, as he knows he will find no one.

BILL

Hello?

He looks bereft as he stands uncertainly in the middle of the house.

The doorbell rings. He hesitates, then goes to open the front door.

EXT. MAPLEWOOD HOME - DAY

BILL opens the door and finds a brown paper-wrapped package on the welcome mat. It says, "For Bill." He picks it up, takes it inside, shuts the door.

Pause. Then: BOOM!

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

JOY sits on the train. She is carrying a bouquet of flowers.

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH SUBWAY STATION - DAY

JOY gets off the train, walks down to the street.

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH AVENUE - DAY

JOY walks amongst many Russian immigrants. She pauses to dig a piece of paper out of her pants pocket. There is an address scribbled on it.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

JOY comes up to the entrance of a seedy building. She hesitates, then walks inside.

INT. SEEDY BUILDING - DAY

JOY climbs a few flights of stairs, arrives at a door with the number 8D on it. She buzzes, then waits. She hears quarreling, in Russian.

ZHENIA opens the door. She has a black eye and a cut lip.

JOY
Oh...er...I'm sorry...I just wanted to...er...Here...

JOY shoves her bouquet of flowers into ZHENIA's hand. She is about to beat a hasty retreat when ZHENIA suddenly calls:

ZHENIA
Boris!

ZHENIA abandons JOY at the door and goes back inside, muttering obscenities (in Russian).

BORIS appears at the door, surprised to see her. Oddly, JOY seems equally surprised to see him.

BORIS
Come inside.

INT. BORIS AND ZHENIA'S PLACE - DAY

JOY sits opposite BORIS. ZHENIA brings her a cup of tea. ZHENIA'S MOTHER sniffles and shuffles about in the b.g.

JOY
(to ZHENIA)
Spaceebo.

BORIS signals ZHENIA to scram.

BORIS
Joy. Why are you come here?

JOY
I just wanted to...um...say I was sorry...to your wife.

BORIS
Zhenia is not my wife.

JOY looks confused, perhaps even suspicious. BORIS shouts something in Russian to ZHENIA.

ZHENIA
(to JOY)
I am not wife Boris.

BORIS corrects Zhenia's grammar.

ZHENIA
I am not...Boris's wife.

BORIS
(to ZHENIA)
Thank you.

And he dismisses her once more.

BORIS
Her English very bad. I try teach, but Zhenia...slow.

JOY
So you mean you're really not married?

BORIS
(laughs)
I am in America! I am free man!

JOY
Is Zhenia a free woman?

BORIS rolls his eyes. Pause.

BORIS
Zhenia love me. It is problem. She want be my wife, but she don't listen. What can I do? What can I do?
(a beat.)
Come. You want I drive you New Jersey? We go shopping mall?

JOY
No, thank you. I don't think that's really...

JOY suddenly notices her guitar lying against the wall opposite. When she turns back to BORIS he is shouting something in Russian at ZHENIA again. ZHENIA shouts something back, and a new quarrel begins. A baby cries somewhere o.s.

When things cool down ZHENIA brings over a tray with pastries and vodka.

BORIS
Joy. I must ask you question.

JOY
Yes?

BORIS
But I very ashamed.

JOY
I'm sure I'll understand.

BORIS
Okay. Can I borrow money?

JOY
Oh. Well...

BORIS
It is very important.

Pause.

JOY
Well, I guess it's better borrowing than stealing...

BORIS
Yes. It is better.

JOY
And money is...only money.

BORIS
Yes. It is only money.

JOY glances over at ZHENIA standing at the other end of the room. Her face is anxious, pleading.

JOY
How much would you like?

BORIS
One thousand dollars.

JOY
A th-thou-.

BORIS
Alright. Five hundred. I need money now.

JOY
W-well I guess I could go to a cash machine...

BORIS
I know where is ATM.

BORIS rises quickly. JOY hesitates.

JOY
Boris?

BORIS
Yes?

JOY
Do you think I could have my guitar back?

EXT. STREET - EVENING

BORIS and JOY, guitar in hand, are walking.

BORIS
Do you think shopping mall in New Jersey is open tonight?

JOY
Yeah. Probably.

They stop outside a bank. JOY withdraws her money from the ATM. BORIS anxiously awaits on the sidewalk until JOY hands it over.

JOY
Here.

BORIS
Joy. I love you.

JOY
You love New Jersey.

BORIS
New Jersey is America!
(laughs, embraces JOY.)
I give you back Monday.

JOY
That's okay. I won't be there, anyway.

BORIS
Why no?

JOY
I don't know, but for some reason... now I have more sympathy for the strikers.

JOY (CONT'D)
(a beat.)
See ya.

BORIS watches JOY walk away with her guitar.

BORIS
(mutters to himself)
Stupid American.

BORIS pockets his money and walks off in the opposite direction.

TITLE CARD: "THANKSGIVING"

EXT. MONA'S CONDO - DAY

BILLY stands on the terrace and looks down. He sees palm trees. He sees the ocean. He sees a beautiful woman sunbathing by the pool. Talk of turkey and weather filters out to him.

KOOKI stands beside him.

INT. BOCA RATON CONDOMINIUM - DAY

LENNY, MONA, HELEN, TRISH, and JOY sit at a long table filled with holiday food. TIMMY watches TV in the b.g. CHLOE sleeps in her crib.

HELEN
...Anyway, so the police came and locked in her freezer and found baggies filled with the super's genitals.

Pause. LENNY salts his food, a heavy dose.

MONA
I use baggies.

JOY
Me too.

HELEN
Everyone uses baggies. That's why we can all relate to the crime. Don't you see?

TRISH
I can't relate to it.

Pause.

HELEN
...In any case, there's a guy I've met, Joy, that I think you'd like. He's into computers, I think.

JOY
How do you know him?

HELEN
He's another neighbor of mine. Do you wanna call him, or should I give him your number?

JOY
I'll call him.

HELEN
Oh, great. I know he'd really like that.

TRISH
What about me?

HELEN
I'm looking, I'm looking.

TRISH
I like computers.

HELEN
Trish, trust me on this one: not for you.

MONA
And what about me?

HELEN
Mom, I haven't forgotten. It's just it's hard. But I am looking for everyone.

LENNY
Don't look for me.

HELEN
Have you found someone?

LENNY
No. There is no one.

Pause.

MONA
I heard Diane Freed had a stroke.

LENNY
She'll recover.

MONA
That's good.

JOY
Where there's life there's hope.

TRISH
That's right.

HELEN
You bet.

MONA
Absolutely.

LENNY
Yeah.

Pause.

JOY
Could you pass over the sweet potatoes, please?

TRISH
Sure.

Pause. LENNY resalts his food.

HELEN
Could you pass down the stuffing, please?

LENNY
Here.

Pause.

TRISH
Anyone watch Leno last night?

Everyone shakes his head or mumbles no.

Pause.

MONA
So what's going to happen now to that woman who killed your super?

HELEN
I don't know, Mom. But it's so sad. She's all alone.
(a beat.)

HELEN (CONT'D)
I wish I'd gotten to know her better. We might have found we had something in common.

Pause.

JOY
Maybe you'll write a poem about her.

HELEN bursts out laughing.

HELEN
I'm sorry. But don't worry. I'm not laughing <u>at</u> you. I'm laughing <u>with</u> you.

JOY
But I'm not laughing.

HELEN stops laughing.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM TERRACE - DAY

CLOSE ON BILLY as his face expresses mounting excitement.

BILLY'S POV

of the beautiful woman sunbathing. She unhooks her bikini top.

BACK TO BILLY

climaxing.

CLOSE ON KOOKI licking up BILLY's little puddle of sperm on the floor.

INT. CONDOMINIUM - DAY

The meal is painfully silent. Finally:

MONA
Let's make a toast.

JOY
To happiness.

EVERYONE ELSE
To happiness!

Glasses clink. Some hesitation before everyone downs the wine. Laughter. KOOKI races in, jumps into TRISH's lap, licks her face.

TRISH
Kooki!

BILLY enters. He is ecstatic. Tears well up in his eyes.

BILLY
I came!

SHOT OF A FULL MOON.

INT. CONDOMINIUM - NIGHT

The CAMERA DOLLIES across the living room and bedrooms. Everyone is in bed, but unable to shut their eyes.

MONA rises to the terrace, her eyes silently welling with tears. JOY follows her.

JOY
Don't, Mom. 'Cause the thing about family is...no matter how distant you are from each other, separated, estranged, divorced, whatever... no matter how little you can relate to each other...it doesn't matter: you're still family. You're not alone...Ya see?

MONA smiles, weakly.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

The sound of a telephone ringing. Then:

SPLIT SCREEN: EXT. ESL SCHOOL/INT. ALLEN'S PLACE - DAY

JOY stands at a payphone, a placard resting on her shoulder. Strikers pace in the b.g.

ALLEN sits half undressed on his bed, phonebook at his side. He answers the phone.

BOUNCY MUSIC.

ALLEN
Hello?

JOY
Hello. Could I please speak to Allen Mellencamp?

ALLEN
Speaking.

JOY
Well, my sister Helen told me I should call you.

ALLEN
Oh, then you must be Joy. Hi.

JOY
Hi. Gee, you sound so familiar.

ALLEN
You do too.

JOY
But in a good way, a way I like.

ALLEN
Me too.

JOY
Huh.

ALLEN
Say, what are you wearing, I mean doing tonight?

JOY
Oh, nothing special. Would you like to get together?

ALLEN
Yeah. I know a great place off Exit 146. Have you heard of Happy's?

JOY
Er...yeah.

ALLEN
Is Happy's no good?

JOY
No. It's great. Let's meet there at eight.

ALLEN
Happy's at eight! See ya!

They hang up, happy, perhaps even smitten.

CUT TO:

BLACK.